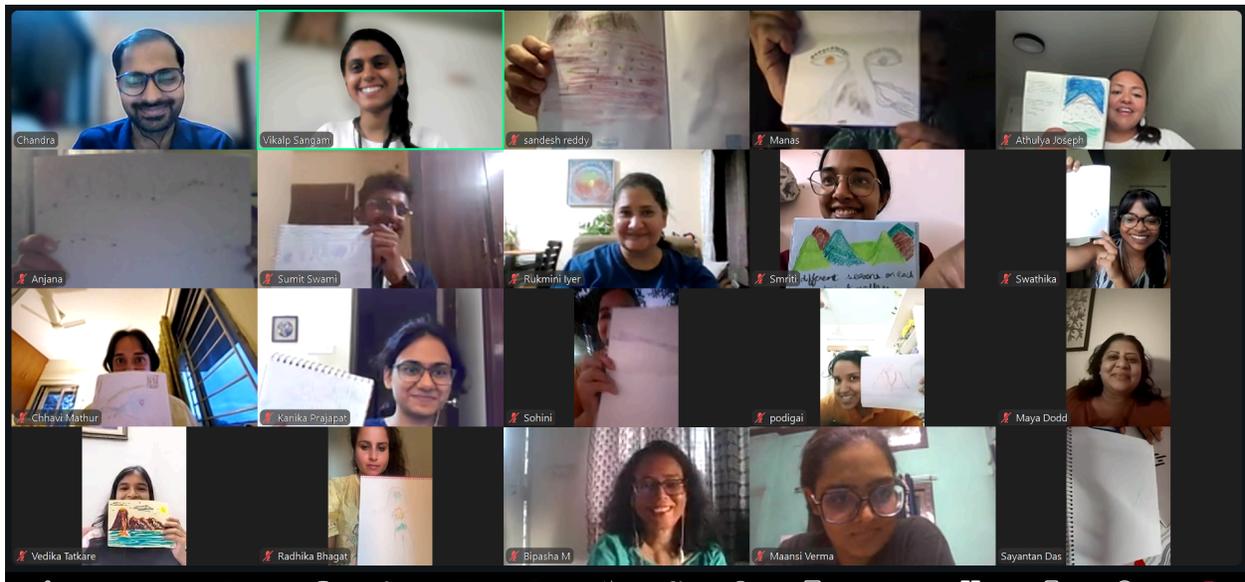


# Report:

## Pluriverse of Alternatives Online Course



Course participants showing their art work done as a part of an exercise

*"I pass through them  
as they pass through me  
taking and leaving  
affections, seeds, skeletons,  
millennia of fossil records  
of insects that do not last  
a day."*

**- A. K. Ramanujan, Elements of Composition -**

The [Pluriverse of Alternatives online course](#) emerged from a year of collective dreaming, dialogue and co-creation by a subgroup of The Alternatives Learning Collective (TALC). Rooted in the rich ecosystems of Vikalp Sangam and informed by decades of grassroots wisdom, the course brought together participants from across India and beyond to explore transformative visions of ecological, social, cultural and economic change. Across eight sessions in September, the course offered a deeply reflective, values-based and relational learning journey, one that centered around humility, interdependence, imagination and care.

We received **44 applications, of which 35 participants** ultimately joined the course. The online programme ran for eight sessions, held every weekend from **6th to 28th September 2025**, with each session lasting two hours. Participants brought with them a rich diversity of professional, personal and lived experiences of being educators, researchers, designers, activists, technologists, farmers and community organisers all came together in this shared learning space. Their motivations were equally varied yet united by a shared longing: to understand the polycrisis more deeply, to question dominant systems, and to seek grounded alternatives that nurture justice, dignity and ecological well-being. Many carried powerful questions from their own lives and work, including the desire to reconnect with nature, to explore place-based knowledge, to deepen community engagement and to navigate personal transitions toward more meaningful and sustainable ways of being.

The course architecture unfolded through three modules (see the course schedule at the end). ***The first module introduced the idea of the polycrisis, inviting participants to locate themselves within the interlinked ecological, social, economic, cultural and existential crises of our time.*** Through grounding exercises, personal storytelling and critical engagement with dominant worldviews, participants began developing a shared language and sensibility for systemic change.

Some grounding exercises were used to explore alternatives in practice. In one activity, participants imagined a community of 50 families, rural or urban, seeking to create “real democracy” through a monthly participatory assembly. Working in five groups, they developed simple rules and ideas on how to ensure meaningful and broad participation, how to distribute power evenly and avoid domination by a few, which ten key areas the assembly should plan and decide on, how to make the assembly lively and enjoyable and what kinds of economies and technologies could support such a democratic process.

In another exercise, groups explored what different school subjects could teach through a real-world, hands-on activity: children in a rural Indian village learning to vaccinate chickens. Each group identified learning possibilities across disciplines, Science, Mathematics, Language, Economics and Social Science highlighting how experiential learning can integrate multiple ways of knowing.

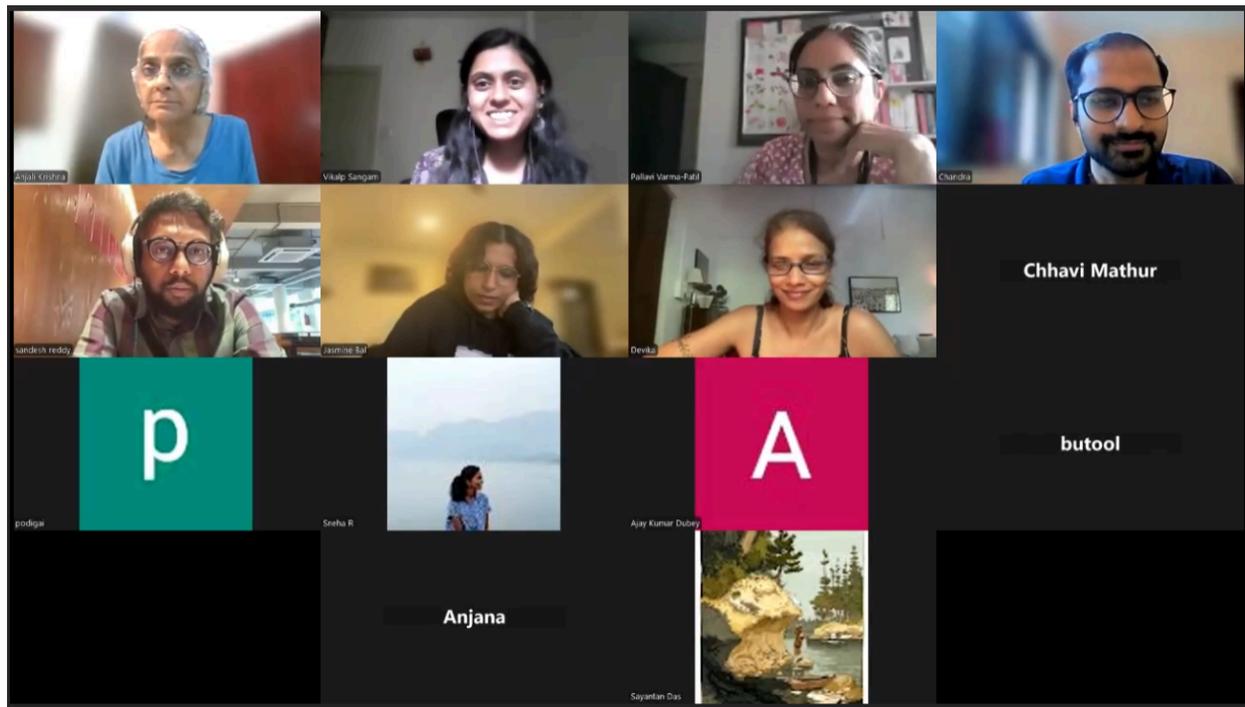


*A snippet from session 1: Climate Scientist Soumya Dutta talking about the interconnectedness of the polycrisis*

**Module Two brought alive the idea of alternatives through the lenses of food, education, technology and governance.** The Flower of Transformation framework offered a holistic map for understanding how ecological, cultural, political, economic and personal spheres intertwine. Facilitators shared rich case studies of grassroots agricultural initiatives, community-based education models, ethical technologies and more-than-human governance, revealing how alternatives are already alive in practice. These sessions were marked by curiosity, vulnerability and meaningful exchanges across diverse worldviews of the participants.

**The final module invited participants to imagine and co-create future pathways through tools for collective dreaming, reflective dialogue and shared visioning.** One such tool encouraged participants to briefly step outside linear, solution-oriented thinking and enter a space of imaginative, embodied inquiry. In a guided activity, they visualised their bodies as landscapes such as mountains, rivers, forests mirroring their emotional terrains and ecological connections. Building on this, they explored questions such as “What river or water body do you belong to?” and “What is your sacred obligation to future generations?” Through drawing, storytelling and quiet reflection, participants shared emerging visions of reciprocity, kinship and right action. These collective imaginings opened space for future pathways rooted in creativity, relationality and ecological belonging, enabling the cohort to explore how such insights could translate into their personal, professional and community contexts. Rather than seeking prescriptive solutions, the emphasis remained on nurturing slow, emergent, relational processes

of transformation. Participants left with strengthened clarity, new companions and an expanded sense of agency.



*A snippet from session 5*

Across the course, several themes resonated strongly: the importance of community and relationship-building; the need to honor indigenous, local and embodied knowledge systems; the value of slowing down and listening; and the recognition that transformation begins as much within ourselves as in the world around us. Many participants shared that the course rekindled hope, deepened inquiry and offered a rare space for honest, compassionate conversations about the world we inhabit and the worlds we wish to build.

Alongside these strengths, the course also opened up important learning edges for us as organisers. While we aspired to create spacious, dialogic learning environments, some sessions leaned more heavily toward speaker-led formats than intended, leaving less room for peer exchange, collective sense-making and slower processing of complex ideas. The depth and richness of content, though deeply valued, occasionally felt dense, inviting us to more consciously design for pauses, reflection and integration. We also observed uneven participation across sessions, with certain community-building spaces, such as the informal Friday campfires, witnessing limited engagement. Questions of continuity and commitment emerged as well, with some participants joining intermittently or dropping off despite initial enthusiasm. Taken together, these experiences have helped us see more clearly the need for lighter content loads, stronger facilitation scaffolds, better-prepared speakers and more intentional peer-centred structures. They invite us to refine our understanding of transformation as a process that requires time, trust, rhythm and relational depth, especially within online learning spaces.

As we look ahead, this course represents not an end but a beginning, a seed of future collaborations, solidarities and shared action. With a growing community of committed learners and practitioners, TALC moves forward with renewed purpose: to continue weaving alternatives, nurturing collective imagination and strengthening movements for just, regenerative and life-affirming futures for all beings.

## Reflections from Participants

Across the eight sessions, participants repeatedly returned to a few shared insights: that alternatives are not abstract ideals but living practices; that connection across disciplines, communities and more-than-human worlds is foundational; and that transformation begins within, even as it unfolds collectively.

Many described the course as grounding and hope-restoring in a time of deep uncertainty:

*“Being part of this course has been a journey of reflection and grounding for me. In the midst of today’s polycrisis, it reminded me again and again that alternatives are not these abstract ideas—they are very much alive, practiced with dignity and resilience by people and communities everywhere. What I carry with me most is the awareness that I need to be more conscious of my own being with the world and nurture my relationship with it in the right and caring way..”*

— **Anjana**

Others spoke of the power that emerged simply from people coming together across fields, experiences and worldviews:

*“This course was under-sold to me. I had already been following some of the speakers and Vikalp Sangam itself for sometime, so I had expected more of the same. But something happens when people come together and talk about what they care most about, our lives, our livelihoods, and the planet as a whole. Everything from pre-history, history, politics, policy, science, indigenous technology, education, food, all of it is connected. All these fields are enriched by being connected and learning from the others, just as we are enriched by our connections with others, we are made whole by our connections to others and nature itself. I am walking away from this course with new ways of looking at myself, others and the world.”*

— **Podigai**

For participants already engaged in development, media or research work, the course offered language, frameworks and space to deepen and articulate what they had long sensed:

*“Given my work as an editor with a media platform that covers India’s development sector extensively, I did have a tentative understanding of India’s polycrisis. This course helped me articulate what I already felt, introduced me to a range of ideas that I did not know about and reacquainted me with others that I had long forgotten*

*about due to a lack of active engagement, and also gave me the space to think about these.”*

*— Participant*

Several participants also highlighted the emotional and relational dimensions of the learning journey, how the course helped counter isolation and rekindle imagination:

*“I would recommend this course to any struggling to find their way in the ever changing and hardening world we live in! The relief and hope I felt learning about the alternative ways of being and doing through this course along with a sense of community with fellow travelers helped me feel less alone and starry-eyed about imagining and hoping that a better world is possible ”*

*— Participant*

Together, these reflections affirm the course’s intention: to offer not just knowledge, but companionship, clarity and courage in navigating the crises of our time.

## Course Structure and Sessions

The **Pluriverse of Alternatives** course unfolded across **three modules and eight sessions**, held online over four weekends in September 2025. Each session combined conceptual framing, grounded case studies and reflective, participatory practices.

### Module 1: Introduction to the Crises

Session	Topic	Speakers
1	The Interconnected Crises	<b>Soumya Datta</b> – Founding member & Co-convenor, South Asian People’s Action on Climate Crisis (SAPACC)
2	Critique of Dominant Systems	<b>K. J. Joy</b> – Founding member, SOPPECOM <b>Meera Sanghamitra</b> – National Working Group, National Alliance of People’s Movements (NAPM)

## Module 2: Introduction to Alternative Thinking

Session	Topic	Speakers
3	What is an Alternative?	<b>Sujit Sinha</b> – Storyteller, Educator <b>Ashik Krishnan</b> – Co-creator, Travellers' University & Learning City Thrissur
4	Alternative Food and Agriculture	<b>A. R. Vasavi</b> – Professor & Secretary, PUNARCHITH <b>R. Santhoshi Srilaya</b> – Agroecology Facilitator <b>Ameer Hamza</b> – Founder, Van Gujjar Tribal Yuva Sangathan
5	Alternative Education	<b>Pallavi Varma-Patil</b> – Lead, Environment Education, ATREE <b>Anjali Krishna</b> – Principal, Chirag School <b>Ravi Gulati</b> – Co-founder, Manzil
6	Alternative Technology	<b>Pankaj Sekhsariya</b> – Associate Professor, CTARA, IIT-B <b>Sandeep Viramani</b> – Co-founder, Hunnarshala & Sahajeevan
7	Earthy Governance and Interspecies Justice	<b>Shrishtee Bajpai</b> – Researcher, Activist, Networker

## Module 3: The Path Ahead

Session	Topic	Speaker
8	Practical Actions	<b>Bipasha Majumder</b> – Writer, Researcher, Facilitator-Educator

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*Supported by Chandramouli Sharma, Sujatha Padmanabhan, Bipasha Majumder and Maansi Verma.*